

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, D.C.

February 14, 1961

Honorable Robert McNamara  
Secretary of Defense  
Room 3E380  
The Pentagon  
Washington, D. C.

Dear Mr. Secretary:

In your nationwide television briefing February 6, you omitted several important and very salient points concerning the vital issue of communism in Cuba.

I would like your reply to the following questions which I have propounded out of my concern for this matter:

1. If the air surveillance is so effective, why were the missiles of the October crisis not detected when they reached the ports of Cuba and when they were transported to their respective sites?
2. If the U.S. did not detect the arrival of the missiles, how do we know that the 42 missiles, reportedly withdrawn, were the total amount of medium and intermediate range rockets shipped to Cuba? Can we rely on Khrushchev's word?
3. If the U.S. Government is unable to assure that medium and intermediate range missiles are not camouflaged or hidden in caves or underground installations in Cuba, why did the President lift the blockade without obtaining the on-site inspection which had been considered essential in his speech of October 22? How can on-site inspection at this crucial time be considered a "dead issue"?
4. How does the U.S. Government account for the admitted presence in Cuba of at least 17,000 Russian soldiers and military experts if during the October crisis the official estimates never exceeded 12,000? Did the air surveillance fail to determine the real number of troops or has there been a considerable military buildup in Cuba since the October crisis?

Honorable Robert McNamara  
Page 2  
February 14, 1963

5. What is the reason for the intelligence gap which apparently existed between early September and mid-October, before Secretary McNamara's statement regarding missiles in Cuba and the Government's statement in support of the President's observations? Were no aerial photographs taken during that period, or was there evidence of the missile buildup in September and early October which was withheld from the public?
6. Have we conceded Russia a right of impunity to stockpile in Cuba tons of arms which would make the strategic island an impregnable fortress from which to subvert and conquer Latin America?
7. Are we going to tolerate the threat of military intervention in Cuba as long as we do not have an aerial photograph of a so-called "offensive missile" pointed at us? Is this the new interpretation of the Monroe Doctrine, the 1947 Treaty of Rio de Janeiro, and the 1962 joint resolution on Cuba?
8. Are we going to continue with the same policy which led to the missile crisis last October and which has not stopped Russia nor has stemmed Castro communist subversion throughout the Hemisphere? Is it enough to say we are concerned as we contemplate the progressive undermining of Democracy in Latin America and the enslavement and destruction of Cuba?
9. Why have we chosen to play down the threat of the exportation of Castro's revolution while at the same time ordering the establishment of a new group of anti-guerrilla military experts that will be based in the Panama Canal Zone to help Latin American countries cope with any communist fomented uprisings? Is there in reality a great threat of the spread of Castro's Marxist line to other countries?
10. Why has the President failed to grasp the temper of American public opinion which he recognized in the October crisis and which is now strongly opposed to our ineffective Cuban policy?
11. If the abandonment of our Jupiter Missile bases in Turkey and elsewhere was contemplated "long before" the Cuban Crisis" as the administration has said, and

Honorable Robert McNamara

Page 3

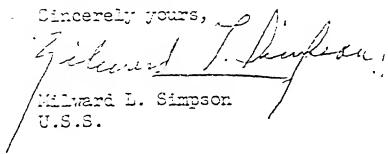
February 14, 1963

if this abandonment is not in anyway contingent on Khrushchev's withdrawal of some missiles from Cuba, why were our overseas bases so lavishly praised and verbally defended by the Defense Department as late as October 29, 1962? When Khrushchev "eased international tensions" prior to November 7, was it with the understanding that we would give up our overseas Jupiter bases?

12. Did the Soviet ship "Nekharok" dock at the port of Cienfuegos last December 5? Was a highly secret cargo, quarantined from regular stevedores, unloaded by Security Police under command of a Soviet Colonel, and was that cargo moved under cover of darkness in trucks driven by Soviet soldiers to caves on the island?
13. Why has the United States Government failed to recognize a Cuban Government in exile, and why is there talk of disbanding the heroic brigade 2506 which fought so gallantly at the Bay of Pigs and which is the rallying point, the symbol of freedom to be regained, for Cuban refugees in the United States?
14. Despite the absence of on-site inspection, does there now exist a pledge, commitment, or "understanding" between the United States and Russia, or the U.S. and Cuba, which is a de facto promise not to invade Cuba?
15. If we do not stop the onslaught of communism 90 miles off our own shores, how can we expect to maintain world leadership and even survive as a free nation?
16. If we accept the precedent of a Sovietized Cuba, how can we assure the other Latin American Republics that if they fall under communist domination, they will not be abandoned by the United States?

I consider replies to these questions to be of great importance in putting Cuba in its proper perspective. I trust your response will be forthcoming at an early date.

Sincerely yours,

  
Milward L. Simpson  
U.S.S.